

CURBSIDE WASTE EDUCATION: 2022 SUMMARY REPORT

General Overview

The Curbside Waste Education Program (CWEP) launched in 2017 and as of 2022, the team has visited every household in St. Albert that receives three-stream waste collection.

By conducting curbside waste education, the team hopes to:

- Encourage proper waste sorting by households
- Encourage proper waste set out of carts and bags at the curb
- Gather information on common waste questions to improve the information provided to residents

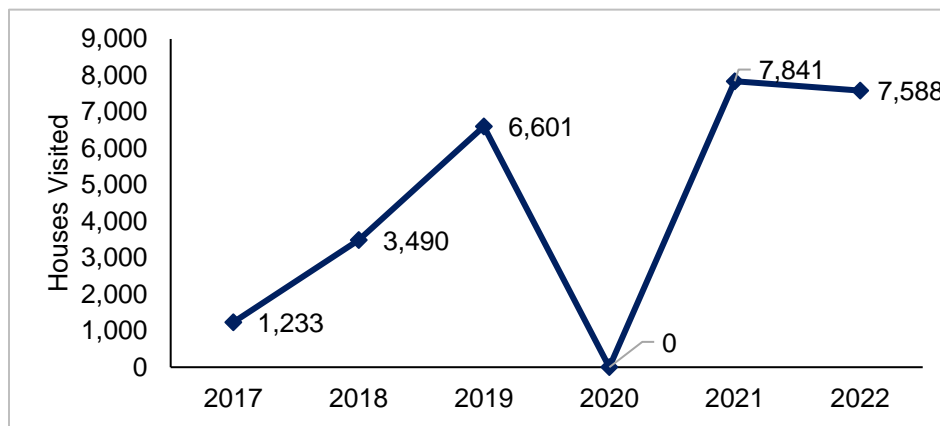


Figure 1 – Total households visited
Note: Due to COVID-19, the program was cancelled for 2020

What's at the Curb?

The number of Brown Garbage Carts (BGC), Green Organics Carts (GOC), and Blue Recycling Bags were recorded for each address visited.

Households whose waste was sorted and set out properly received a “Thank You” Sticker. In total, 1,219 (16%) of houses received Thank You stickers. It should be noted that the other houses did not necessarily have errors with sorting or set out, but rather they may not have set out all three waste streams.

Table 1 - Set out data for 2022

Homes	Not Set Out	# BGC	# GOC	# BRB	Thank You	Set Out Error
7,588	995 (13%)	6,968 (92%)	5,744 (76%)	6,668 (88%)	1,219 (16%)	260 (3%)

CONTAMINATION

Unacceptable materials (contamination) in the BRB and GOC can lead to increased program costs, and in the case of the latter, may lower the quality of the finished product.

While uncommon, the Brown Garbage Cart can also be contaminated. In 2022, approximately 1% of BGC contained unacceptable materials such as hazardous waste or electronics.

Green Organics Carts

Contamination in the Green Organics Carts was widespread across the City. When a few carts on a collection route are contaminated, they may cause the entire load to be landfilled. Haulers self declare based on visual assessments, and if the haulers determine that the load exceeds 30% contamination, then the load is landfilled. The cost to dispose of contaminated organics at the landfill is 17% higher than the cost to bring organics to the compost pad. Furthermore, organic material that ends up in the landfill instead of the compost pad undergoes anaerobic decomposition, releasing methane (a potent greenhouse gas) in the process. In addition to the negative environmental impact of landfilling organics, the increased cost will ultimately be borne by the utility rate payers of St. Albert.

In 2022, the CWEP team inspected 5,744 Green Organics Carts, and on average 10.3% of carts were contaminated with at least one type of unacceptable material. Households with mild contamination in the GOC received an “Oops! What Goes Where?” door hanger and the contaminant was recorded. GOC that were heavily and/or deliberately contaminated were sealed closed with an “Oops!” stickers and were not collected.



Photo 1 - Black garbage bag



Photo 2 – Recycling bag

Contamination by Neighbourhood

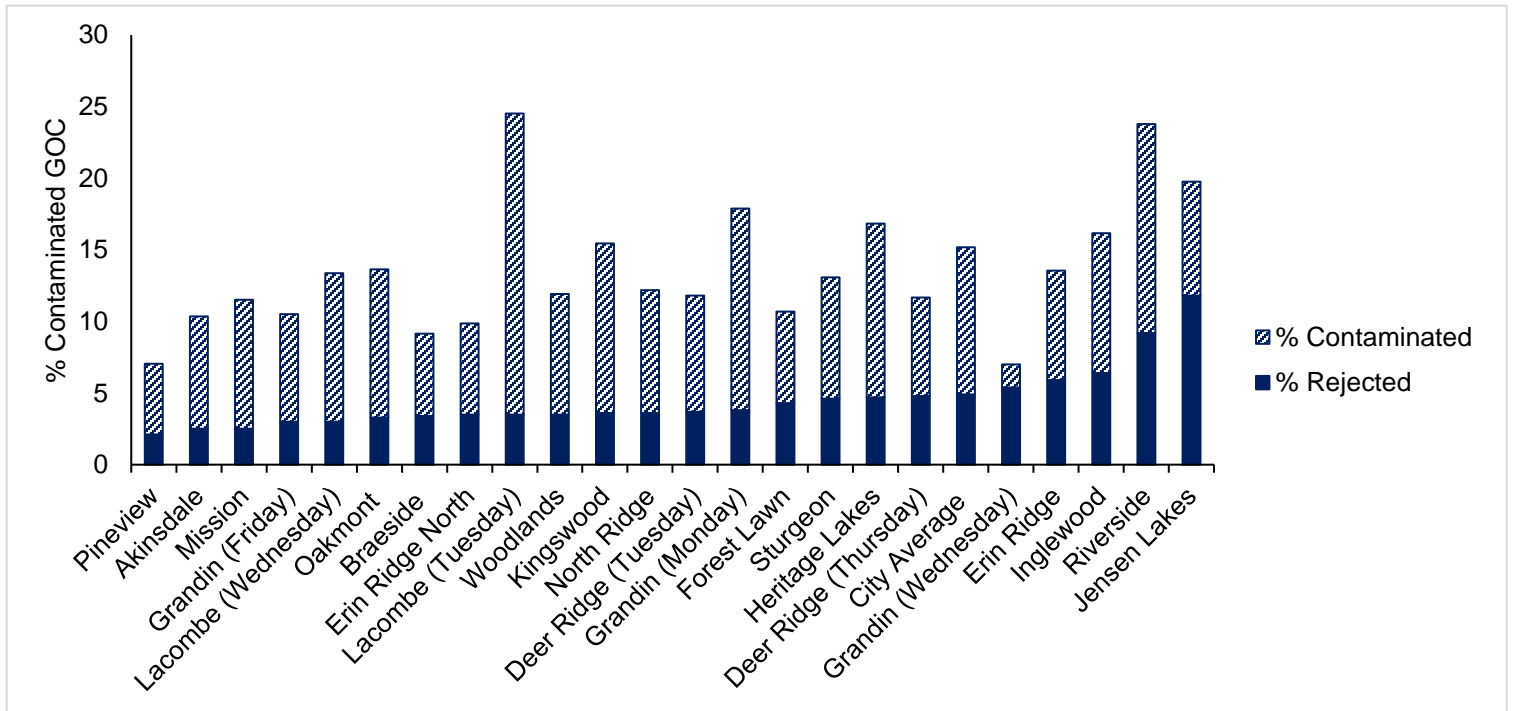


Figure 2 - The % of inspected Green Organics Carts that were contaminated. The solid blue bars represent the % of inspected carts that were rejected, while the lined blue bars represent the % of inspected carts that were contaminated, but whose contamination did not warrant a rejection.

Contamination by Material

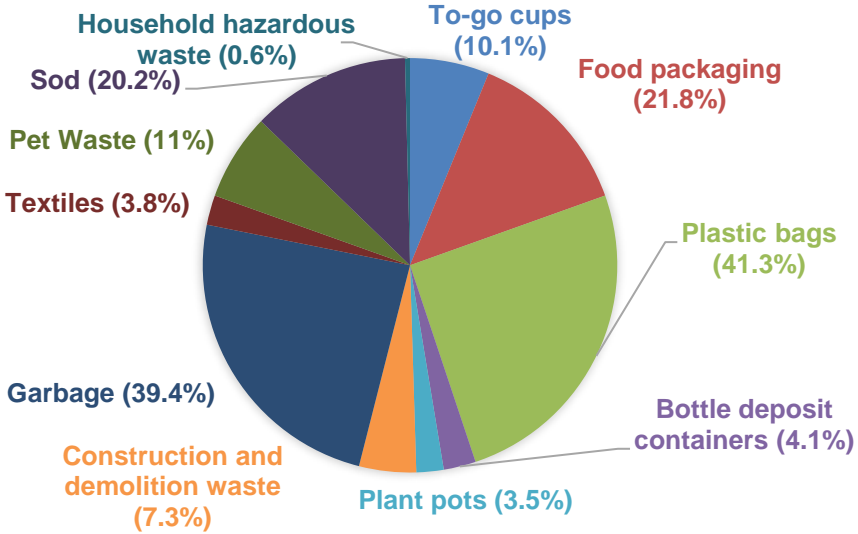


Figure 3 - Contamination by material type in the Green Organics Cart

Rejected Organics Follow Up

After the CWEP was completed, from September 6-16, CWEP team members returned to some of the houses where the GOC was rejected during the CWEP in 2021 and 2022 to check for continued contamination of the GOC. Out of the 67 houses that were checked, 18% of the GOC were rejected for a second time, 13% of carts were contaminated but not rejected (minor contaminations), 57% of carts were not set out, and 12% of carts had no contaminants and were not rejected.

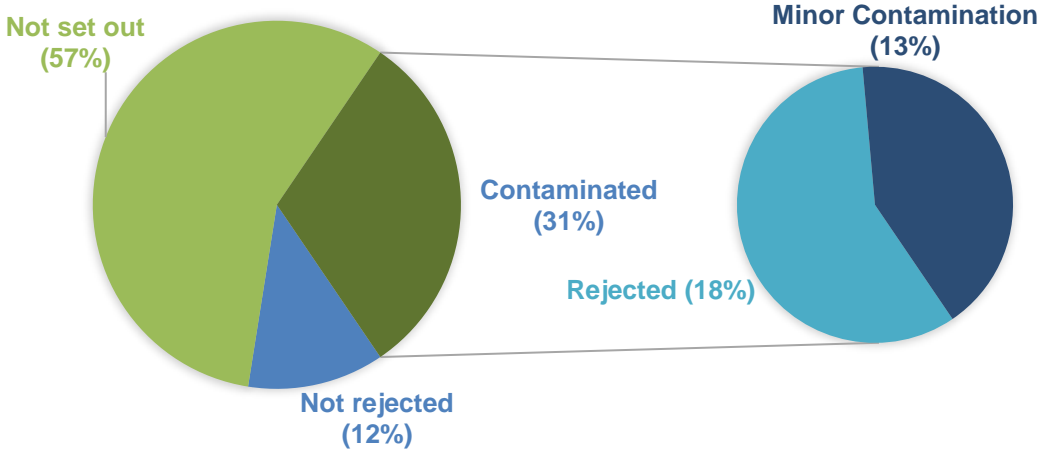


Figure 4 – Results of Reject Organics Follow Up

Blue Recycling Bag

Contamination in the BRB was widespread. Bags with minor contamination received an “Oops! What Goes Where?” door hanger. Blue Recycling Bags were rejected with an orange “Oops!” sticker if:

- There were more than three categories of contaminants present
- There was glass or household hazardous waste (batteries, aerosols, motor oil, etc.) in the bag
- The recyclables were not empty, clean, and dry

Contamination by Neighbourhood

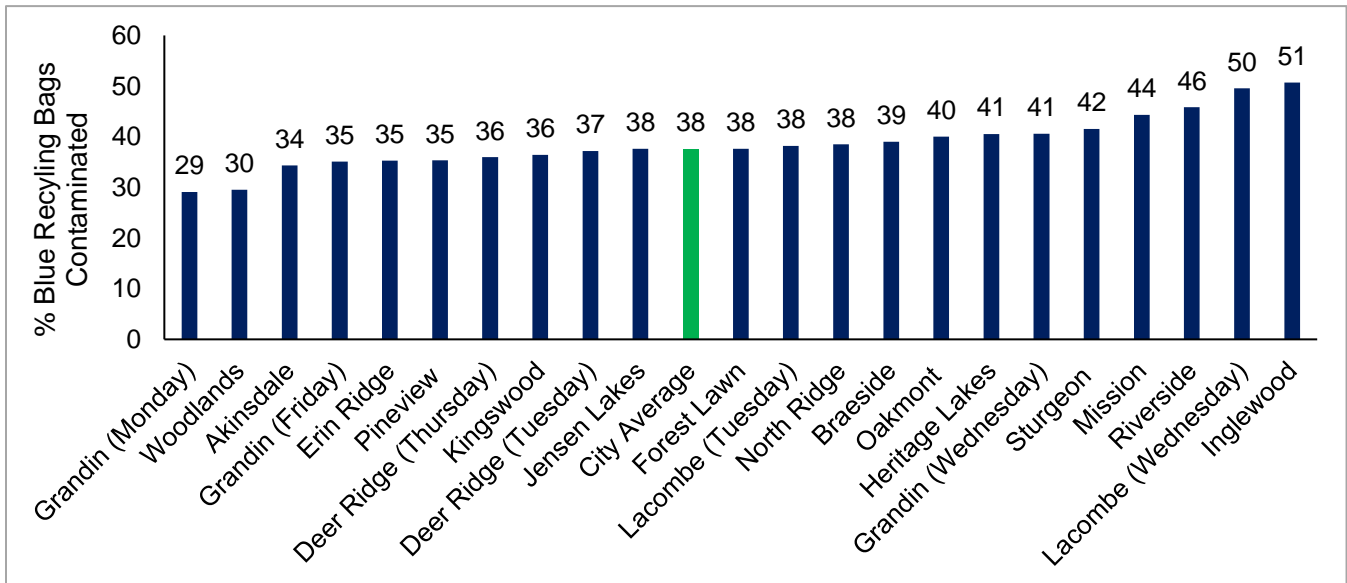


Figure 5 - % of Blue Recycling Bags contaminated by neighbourhood
Note: The CWEP team did not track Blue Recycling Bag rejections

Contamination by Material

City wide, plastic wrap (10%), garbage (11%), plastic clamshell containers (15%), and other (18%) were the most common contaminants. Items in the other category include items that were found less frequently, but were still commonly found in the BRB, such as pizza boxes, spiral wound containers, cardboard ice cream cartons, single use yogurt/ pudding cups, and hazardous waste such as batteries and aerosols.

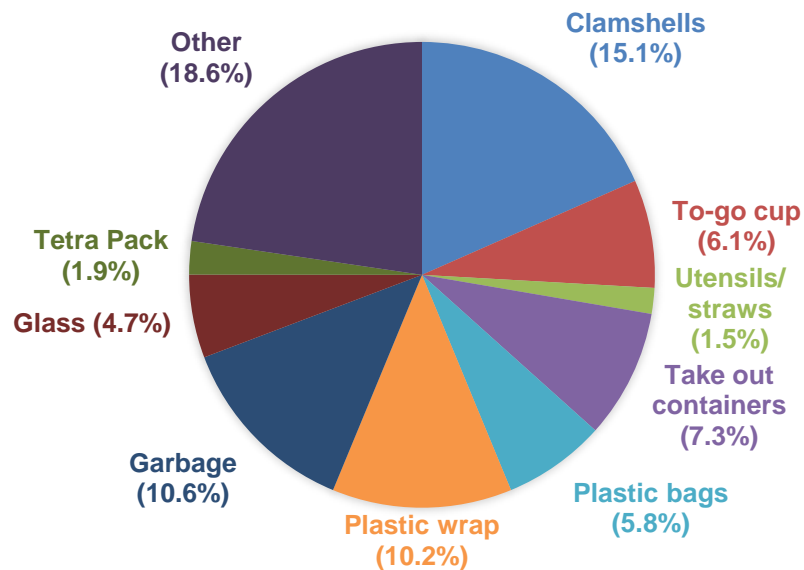


Figure 6 - Contamination by material type in the Blue Recycling Bag

EXTRA GARBAGE

Extra garbage that does not fit in the BGC can be disposed of at the Mike Mitchel Recycling Depot with an attached, pre-purchased “Extra Garbage” tag. Despite this service, approximately 2% of households overfilled their BGC at the curb or placed extra bags beside their carts. Overfilled carts attract pests and impact the ability to safely tip the cart into the truck. Houses with overfilled carts received an “Oops! Extra Garbage” door hanger, which provided instructions on how to purchase bag tags and where to bring extra garbage.



Photo 3 – Overfilled Garbage Cart

CART SET OUT ERRORS

Carts must be placed at the curb, with the wheels against the curb and the arrows pointing towards the street. To ensure safe collection, they must not be overflowing and there must be a minimum of 1 m (3 ft) spacing on all sides, including overhead (i.e. carts cannot be placed under a basketball hoop or tree).

Households whose carts were not set out properly received a “Curb Your Cart” door hanger informing them to “Park It. Point It. Space It.” And the CWEP team corrected the error.

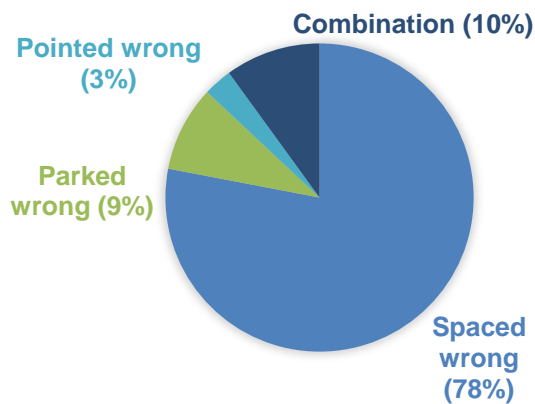


Figure 7 - Cart set out errors in 2022



Photo 4 - Carts parked and pointed wrong

CONCLUSION

This report will work in tandem with the Curbside Waste Composition Study to form recommendations for future education and outreach opportunities. The Annual Report to Council will be available to the public in the spring.